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Official Records

2nd plenary meeting
Monday, 8 June 1998, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Udovenko ..... (Ukraine)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 8 *(continued)*

General debate

The President: I should like to thank those delegations that were punctual. Punctuality is becoming a habit in this Hall.

The first speaker is His Excellency Mr. Ernesto Pérez Balladares, Constitutional President of the Republic of Panama.

President Pérez Balladares (*interpretation from Spanish*): This Organization, which was created 53 years ago to put an end to all wars, is waging today the strangest one of all: today, without a single act of conquest or territorial annexation, all States are being victimized; without there being aggressor States, all States have been attacked; and without there being a formal declaration of war, all States are at war.

The vast majority of countries represented here did not participate in any of the two major wars of this century; many of them had not even made their entry into the community of nations. However, given the enormity of those conflicts, historians have decided to refer to them as World Wars. It is true that they had devastating effects in the areas where the fighting took place and in the countries whose economies and populations suffered. But in actual fact, from the standpoint of geography and despite their appellation, those were not wars with a universal participation. The threat of similar conflagrations today seems to have vanished, but the causes and the consequences of another war are evident — a war against enemies whose identity and methods are often unknown.

The magnitude of this struggle, which has been imposed upon us and from which we cannot escape, is such that partial successes, as impressive as they may at times appear, are actually small compared with the setbacks we suffer every day. Every seizure or confiscation is a significant victory, but every youth who becomes an addict and every life lost is a regrettable defeat.

That is why, although I am satisfied with what my country has done in this area — almost incredible feats, if we take into account its size and resources — I would rather focus on the task that awaits us together rather than on the measures that we have adopted individually or on the impressive statistics that, as a nation, we can show.

I am indeed proud of Panamanian officials and agents who have risked and continue to risk their lives every day, and of those who have devised and carried out new ways of fighting sophisticated criminality. But I feel the way those soldiers from many small towns must have felt who fought in the so-called world wars and wrote pages of individual heroism that had no significant impact on the final outcome of the war.

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I will save that testimony, because when this comes to an end and we have won, those acts will come into their own and become part of the chronicle of a very special war — a war that does not include major clashes on vast battlefields but is won in the minor, everyday skirmishes fought not by renowned generals, but by anonymous heroes who daily face the criminals, assist the victims and help prevent greater disasters.

The commitment that we will make here cannot be limited to implementing the texts of the declarations and plans of action agreed to and signed. That would be comparable to the complacent attitude of the father who is satisfied that his child is attending school but does not care whether or not the child is learning.

Each of our countries has a contribution to make, but it must do so with the determination and strength necessary to achieve results, not merely to comply formally with agreements and be at peace with the international community.

This will not be easy. The rule of law offers recourses and protections which criminals twist into technicalities to delay and obstruct judicial process; otherwise, they resort to threats to preserve their impunity. There are always representatives of the media who, on the pretext of defending due process, end up by depicting those who have sown corruption and violence as victims worthy of compassion.

All of this requires of us commitments greater than those put down in writing and calls on us once again to consider the need for concerted efforts among nations. If there are no territorial borders for the enemy, there should be none for us. Only thus will this war end. The war which we propose to wage today against a despicable and cruel scourge, which shall remain nameless, is perhaps the only truly world war.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Panama for his statement.

The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Alberto Fujimori, President of the Republic of Peru.

President Fujimori (*interpretation from Spanish*): The drug traffickers' criminal networks can be afforded no breathing space or time to regroup. This, I believe, is a crucial consideration.

In Peru in 1990, there were 120,000 hectares of illegal coca fields. The acreage remained constant for four years, during which the process of pacification was under way. Over the past three years, once terrorism, the ally of the drug trade, was dismembered with the help of our anti-drug strategy, a spectacular decline to 60,000 hectares has taken place, accompanied by a commensurate drop in the number of rural families tied to the coca economy. We expect that this figure will soon drop to 30,000 hectares.

The path being followed by the farmers who dedicate their own resources to planting other crops is an unequivocal signal that today's conditions are immensely conducive to launching an alternative economic programme. However, the resources required by the Peruvian State to implement this policy are insufficient.

A programme of this type calls for investment in basic infrastructures in order to ensure that legal economic activities will be profitable. The capacity of the producing countries to consolidate the process of crop substitution is restricted by debt-service commitments entailed by their high level of external indebtedness. That is why we believe that the developed countries should make every effort to support us and to avoid breakdowns in the process that will generate more frustration, more poverty and recreate the conditions for a revival of drug-trafficking. This requires nipping potential supplies in the bud.

That is obvious enough. Nevertheless, the political will must be translated into financial resources that will allow the programme to be implemented in a sustainable way and with the required degree of speed and timeliness. This is where creative formulas or mechanisms will be required to make funds available to the developing countries.

In this context, we have invited friendly countries to attend a donors' round table to be held in October under the auspices of the Inter-American Development Bank and the Inter-American Commission for the Control of Drug Abuse. The purpose of the meeting is to secure the complementary financial resources required to implement alternative development, prevention and rehabilitation programmes within the framework of anti-poverty policies and the sustainable management of natural resources. This will make it possible to obtain credit for the fight against drugs at a much lower cost.

The second, complementary formula for financing alternative activities is inspired by the concept of trading indebtedness for programmes to protect our natural or cultural heritage. This possibility leads us to believe that it would also be feasible to exchange foreign debt for alternative development activities. In this way, a significant portion of the annual debt service obligations payable by our countries to the creditor States could be earmarked for specific programmes and activities to facilitate a global strategy to fight illicit drug-trafficking.

This method of generating resources would involve an indirect but seminal type of investment by the creditor States, consistent with the principles of solidarity and shared responsibility. Instead of extraordinary expenditures, this type of investment would entail a simple transfer of resources.

The philosophy underlying these proposals — the donors' round table and the exchange of debt for the eradication of coca — is the same: reaching beyond the juridical context, cooperation agreements and technical capacities to achieve the will to make funding available to wage the war on drugs.

Today, following the visible progress achieved in combating illicit drug-trafficking, the international community faces a defining moment that may herald the eradication of this scourge.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Peru for his statement.

The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Guntars Krasts, Prime Minister of the Republic of Latvia.

Prime Minister Krasts (Latvia): Latvia welcomes this opportunity to address a major international problem. The use, production and trafficking of narcotics threaten the stability of every State, without regard to its wealth, size or economic development.

The end of the cold war has opened doors both for economic development and for political opportunity. New challenges have appeared along with the benefits of newfound economic freedoms. Unfortunately, criminals who traffic in drugs have often shown the ability to adapt to new circumstances more flexibly and quickly than governmental authorities. Ultimately, society suffers as addiction and crimes related to drugs spread.

Latvia has undertaken the task of controlling the problem of drugs through identifying its scope and passing comprehensive legislation, as well as preventive and enforcement measures. The difficulty of implementing these measures has been compounded by the disastrous legacy of 50 years of Soviet occupation.

Latvia is becoming increasingly vulnerable to illicit drug trade. In spite of our efforts to the contrary, the transit of illegal drugs through Latvia has increased over the past five years. Latvia is located on a two-way highway of illicit drug traffic. Natural narcotics such as hashish and poppy straw move from the Caucasus and Central Asian countries to the West, while synthetic drugs, including amphetamine and ephedrone, move from Western Europe to the East.

At the same time, production of amphetamine and other synthetic illicit drugs appears to be on the rise in Latvia. An increase is observed in the level of crimes connected with the illicit use of and traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. These crimes have acquired the profile of organized crime, being frequently linked to money-laundering, corruption and prostitution.

During the Soviet period a strong technical infrastructure developed for the production of pharmaceuticals. Since the collapse of markets for these products in the countries of the former Soviet Union, some unemployed chemists have become involved in the illicit production of amphetamine, taking advantage of under-utilized facilities.

In attempting to strike a balance between prevention, treatment and law enforcement activities, Latvia has assumed that demand reduction is as important as supply reduction. Special attention is paid to the creation of effective prevention programmes targeted at youth and high-risk groups. The value of early recognition and treatment of those with drug-addiction problems cannot be overstated.

Latvia is deeply concerned about the use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances by young people under the age of 18. A survey performed in the capital of Latvia by the Drug Enforcement Bureau revealed that approximately 80 per cent of high school students have tried drugs at least once. The statistics of the Bureau also reveal an increasing number of deaths from drug abuse among youth.

Lately in Latvia, as in many other countries, there have been extensive discussions in the mass media about the legalization of the so-called light or soft narcotic drugs. The Government of Latvia accepts the view that all categories of drugs cause dependence and therefore is not prepared to legalize any form of drugs.

Latvia believes that drug control measures should not be carried out in an isolated manner, but in integration with other programmes, including those related to the control of alcohol. Latvia will work to reduce the demand for both drugs and alcohol in a coordinated manner.

Latvia was the first Baltic State to adopt legislation on precursors and the first to introduce the pre-export notification system for ephedrine. In November 1997 the Riga criminal police department established a special unit to combat drug abuse and trafficking. The Latvian Drug Enforcement Bureau has improved its performance over the past few years. The number of detected drug offences is increasing. The United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) has provided human resources training, technical support and expert consultations for these efforts.

Latvia is the host of the Baltic regional office of UNDCP. Following the recommendations of UNDCP, the Government of Latvia has prepared a National Drug Control Programme and is working to adopt a National Drug Control Strategy Plan that would define the major objectives for a drug control system and also improve coordination among the ministries involved.

The Riga branch of the Dublin Group plays an important role in the financing of counter-narcotic activities. It coordinates the contributions of foreign donors — including the United States of America, the European Union, UNDCP and other European countries — in supporting the Government of Latvia.

Latvia is aware of the transnational nature of the struggle against drugs. We attach particular importance to regional and subregional cooperation as an effective way to combat illicit traffic in drugs and psychotropic substances.

UNDCP assistance for legislative reforms in the Baltic States as a regional group has led to extensive cooperation among experts from Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania in the training of experts and the drafting of national drug control strategies. The basis for this cooperation is the United Nations Conventions of 1961, 1971 and 1988, which have been ratified by the Baltic States. The Prime Ministers of the Baltic States adopted a resolution which reaffirmed their intention to continue this cooperation. In addition to priorities such as strengthening border controls, combating international organized crime, illegal immigration and money-laundering, the resolution touches upon measures against the illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs. In this context, one should mention the successfully implemented policies adopted by the conference of Baltic States on money-laundering.

Within the framework of Nordic-Baltic cooperation the ministerial meeting on narcotic drugs was held this year in Stockholm, Sweden, should be mentioned. At that meeting a joint statement was adopted which strongly supported the goals and the message of this special session. In addition, the statement addresses preventive measures, the cooperation of police and customs officials and treatment of those affected by drug abuse.

In conclusion, I would like to express my conviction that the successful cooperation of the Government of Latvia with the central office of UNDCP for Eastern European States in Vienna, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the International Narcotics Control Board and other Member States will continue.

The President: I thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Latvia for his statement.

The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Arnoldo Alemán Lacayo, President of the Republic of Nicaragua.

President Lacayo (*interpretation from Spanish*): Aware of the vital importance for humanity and for future generations of the item on the agenda of this special session of the General Assembly, the Government of the Republic of Nicaragua — over which I preside — has come here in order to confirm its moral vocation before this great body and world public opinion. This is an unbreakable political decision to unreservedly join efforts and actions with the international community in order to combat head-on and on all fronts illegal drug-trafficking and its associated crimes, which include money-laundering, the diversion of chemical precursors and illegal arms trafficking.

This crusade is not just for Governments; it should actively involve civil society and all sectors of our countries; it should constitute a solid commitment, at the domestic as well as the supranational level, aimed at

building a common front on the basis of the principles of shared responsibility and united multilateral assistance.

The developing countries, especially those such as Nicaragua that are largely impoverished and in debt as a result of recent civil wars, and that are making enormous efforts to readjust and restructure while applying measures to overcome poverty and unemployment, find themselves in a very precarious situation in terms of technical capacity, skilled human resources and economic resources to face on their own these powerful enemies of humanity, which operate on a worldwide scale with an astonishing abundance of financial and technological resources and networks of protection and abetment created through corruption and violence.

We must carefully define concerted and joint action for the future to combat the advance in the demand for, traffic in and production, sale and illicit distribution of narcotics, the chemical substances required for their manufacture and psychotropic substances and to combat other activities closely related to these crimes, which are multinational in nature and scope and show an increasing tendency towards globalization. These are enormous and daunting challenges that call for responses of equal magnitude and scope.

It is also necessary to analyse the various additional problems related to the transport of drugs and the use of transit countries, as well as to the delicate legal, constitutional, migratory, penal and sovereignty aspects, so as to facilitate the swiftest and most expeditious methods of pursuit, capture and rigorous application of justice, without undermining the relations of dignity and respect that are required between friendly and fraternal nations.

Within these guidelines of close cooperation we do not consider it reasonable for a partner or ally to have rights that allow it to be a self-appointed arbiter and to invest itself unilaterally with functions that belong to international bodies expressly invested with such powers.

At the national level, actions leading to the eradication of these harmful and dangerous activities that are so destructive to human beings, families and society, and that can seriously erode democratic processes, sustainable development, security and even the strategic structure of States, should be one of the highest priorities.

Drugs are one of the most serious universal threats. The tendency is for the rates of violence, corruption and criminality to increase as drug crimes advance. They seriously damage the physical and spiritual health of our young, family harmony and the parameters of social coexistence.

My country fully undertook the commitment to provide resolute support for the initiative to hold this special session of the General Assembly, which was promoted with great vision by President Zedillo of Mexico, and we hope that the draft Political Declaration, submitted by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs as the preparatory body, will be unanimously approved.

I believe it appropriate to express our well-deserved recognition for the role played by the United Nations through its various programmes and agencies, especially the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, in the struggle against drug-trafficking, related activities and the repercussions.

Nicaragua constantly strives to comply as fully as possible with the bilateral, multilateral and regional agreements that provide better cooperation and coordination in the daily struggle against this implacable scourge, and we also adhere to the international conventions on drugs and the initiatives to promote judicial cooperation and introduce measures to reduce demand, eradicate prohibited crops and foster the development of feasible alternatives.

The challenges are great, but even greater and more resolute is our decision to face them with courage and integrity, certain as we are that success lies in the sum of the efforts and resources that we all bring to this common struggle for the security, health and survival of our peoples and our nations.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Nicaragua.

The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle, President of the Republic of Chile.

President Frei (*interpretation from Spanish*): The difficulties, tensions and challenges that nations face today are not confined or exclusive to each of them individually. Drug abuse and illicit drug-trafficking, money-laundering and other associated crimes, the eradication of poverty and the pollution of the environment — all of these issues have, of course, a local dimension. But they also have a more and more powerful international dimension.

Just as the growing liberalization of international trade has had beneficial effects on the development of many regions and countries outside the orbit of the industrialized nations, we must also understand that the transnational nature of the criminal activity associated with drug-trafficking poses a profound and severe challenge to the idea of an international order based on the values of peace, solidarity and progress for all.

In short, drugs constitute a flagrant threat that seriously endangers institutions, families and social coexistence, just as it also affects relations among countries.

This Assembly is meeting to take up one of the world's problems in most urgent need of a solution. For years the issue has been on the international agenda. It has become a very sensitive factor in relations among States and has demanded the priority attention of multilateral and regional bodies. Considerable resources have been allocated to prevent and limit the growth of demand and to control and halt illicit trafficking.

However, more than 30 years after the 1961 Convention, the legal instrument that encouraged international cooperation in this sphere, we must acknowledge that the balance is negative. As a community of nations, we have achieved only precarious advances in this work and we have not been able to develop renewed strategies to deal with an ever changing phenomenon, which undoubtedly has powerful resources available to it.

I wish to draw special attention to one aspect. We have constantly asserted that it is urgent and unavoidable that we tackle the problem jointly, and we say it again now. But we have not been capable of implementing this idea — at least not to the extent necessary.

Accordingly, we need to take substantive steps to design policies of cooperation in the framework of a new way of understanding and practising international responsibility. In the context of today's world, and in order to be truly effective in bringing about a decrease in consumption and the eradication of supply, we must act on the basis of mutual confidence, solidarity and reciprocal and horizontal assistance, with full respect for domestic law and the principles of international law.

We shall be able to work together effectively when we recognize that the traditional responsibility of States within their borders, with its marked preoccupation with domestic affairs and its excessive jealousy for the State's prerogatives, is no longer enough to deal with the drug problem. In this context, we propose the full implementation of the 1988 United Nations Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, of the treaties that preceded it and of regional and bilateral agreements, in line with a new concept of solidarity: no longer solely moral and ethical, but also legal solidarity.

Let me recall some of the agreements reached at the second Summit of the Americas, held a few months ago at Santiago de Chile. Since the first such meeting, held in Miami in 1994, we have been developing joint procedures to build a system that is comprehensive, unified, consensual and egalitarian as regards rights, duties and responsibilities, a system that will enable us to respond appropriately to drug abuse and all of its related problems. In 1996, the Governments of the hemisphere adopted a Hemispheric Anti-drug Strategy, a development that constituted a major step forward. The Strategy attaches special importance to comprehensive and balanced treatment of the phenomenon of illicit drugs.

At the Santiago Summit we took a new and important step, the adoption of a Plan of Action that defines very specific activities to be carried out in the years to come. Responsibility for these activities, as well as for the impartial technical evaluation of progress made under the Plan, has been assigned to the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), the prestigious specialized body of the Organization of American States. The Plan of Action recognizes and highlights the commitment required of civil society, businesses and grass-roots organizations. We are well aware that this involves a vast effort, the success of which is undoubtedly linked with the strengthening of democracy, with greater participation, with decentralization of authority and with economic growth throughout our hemisphere. This is why we lay so much stress on the comprehensive nature of the fight against drugs. At the same time, the Heads of State or Government of the Americas affirmed our conviction that drug abuse calls for preventive measures, especially education measures, addressed to young people and vulnerable groups, measures which can have full effect only on the context of social peace and broad citizen participation.

Furthermore, given the special international nature of the criminal activities associated with drug-trafficking and money-laundering, we agreed with unambiguous political will to cooperate in all areas, especially with

regard to reciprocal judicial assistance, since the task before us is to investigate, prove and punish extremely complex crimes. In this way, within the community of the Americas, we have been formulating a strategy, backed up by clear and binding decisions, for dealing with this problem.

I wish to refer also to some of the actions that the Government of Chile has taken. In 1995, new legislation was adopted, dealing with the drug problem and with new crimes that had hitherto not existed in Chile, such as money-laundering and the diversion of precursors and other chemicals. This modern legal instrument has enabled us to tackle much more effectively the work of suppressing illicit drug-trafficking and associated crimes. In cooperation with the police forces of other countries and applying the new legislation to the full, we have achieved outstanding success in taking apart illicit drug- and precursor-trafficking and money-laundering networks.

In the field of prevention, which we consider crucial, we have established a national fund for the prevention of drug use. Public and private institutions can submit proposals for technical and financial assistance for activities in the areas of prevention of drug abuse, of the treatment and rehabilitation of addicts, and of applied research. I highlight this initiative because it has features that epitomize the approach we are seeking to apply to the fight against drugs. It includes citizen initiative and participation, the sharing of responsibility between the central State authorities and autonomous State or private bodies, incentives to creativity and responses based very clearly on the specific needs of vulnerable groups. The greater part of the programmes are aimed at strengthening prevention programmes and social participation, prevention in schools and treatment and rehabilitation.

There is no need to reiterate here the seriousness of the problem we are facing. Rather, I have outlined very briefly some of the experience either in our region or in my own country. I believe that open, frank and generous cooperation is the only way in which we shall succeed in controlling this evil that causes us so much harm, especially the younger members of our society. We can already see beyond the bounds of our century; we can already begin to sketch the map of the world we want in the future. In that world, we will certainly have to be more and more committed to the fight against drug-trafficking and money-laundering. Let us leave rhetoric and statements of good intentions behind. We know what has to be done. Among the countries members of the Assembly, there is a wealth of experience from which we can all benefit. Now is the time for action.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Chile for his statement.

I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ernesto Samper Pizano, President of the Republic of Colombia.

President Samper Pizano (*interpretation from Spanish*): I would like to begin by congratulating the Secretary-General and you, Mr. President, on the convening of the special session that gathers us here today. We are beginning to understand that the drug problem concerns all countries in the world and that, in this matter, to cite the Biblical passage, no one is so free of sin as to be able to cast the first stone.

Colombia would need much more than seven minutes to convey our painful experiences over the past 15 years as a result of our fight against drug-trafficking. The devastating effects of drugs on political institutions, on economic development, and on the health and security of our citizens oblige us to reflect deeply and frankly on how the nations of the world can and must confront this serious problem as we approach the twenty-first century.

Just 10 years ago, the United Nations Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances was signed at Vienna. Although we have made a great deal of progress in the implementation of its provisions, it is clear that the problem has advanced much faster than its remedy.

The number of hectares under illegal crops is approaching half a million, that of consumers 200 million, and the monetary turnover of the narcotics market over $500 billion — which is higher than the figures for the oil market. Moreover, synthetic drugs are beginning to displace natural drugs, especially in industrialized countries.

The best contribution that my country, Colombia, can make to the reflection that begins today in this Assembly is to tell our story so that it may be taken into consideration and so that what happened to us does not happen to other countries: to be scourged by this evil, comparable only to one of the 10 biblical plagues.

Twenty years ago, Colombia was a relatively peaceful country. We looked to our future with optimism. The economy was healthy. With few exceptions, people

lived peacefully in all of the country's regions. The arrival of drugs perturbed what seemed to be a happy destiny for a nation of hard-working, honest and happy people.

The accursed drug money penetrated the economy, suddenly took over honest businesses, contaminated politics and corrupted values. Judges, journalists, presidential candidates, mayors and more than 3,000 policemen fell victim to narco-terrorism. Drug money became a source of funding for the various forms of violence that we are fighting against today, beginning with the guerrilla and vigilante groups.

No other country has done as much as mine, and so alone, to combat drug-trafficking. We spend more than $1 billion a year in this task, a sum equivalent to 21 per cent of what it costs us to provide education for all of our children. In recent years we have eradicated 60 per cent of all the coca crops that have been eradicated worldwide and 36 per cent of the poppy crops. We are developing social crop substitution programmes to lift out of illegality more than 35,000 peasant families that now make a living from drugs. We dismantled the two largest drug cartels — the Medellín and Cali cartels — and we have more than 9,000 drug traffickers in prison. We have adopted drastic asset-forfeiture laws for properties that were acquired with drug money. We re-established the extradition of our own nationals, which had been forbidden by our Constitution, so that they may be prosecuted abroad. We increased sentences, penalized consumption and, in order to avoid the recycling of drug profits, we codified the crime of laundering assets and money. All of our seas and skies are electronically monitored to prevent the transport of narcotics out of or through the country.

Thanks to all of these efforts, we are saving the youth of the world from more than 52 billion doses of cocaine and three billion doses of heroin per year.

What do we ask in return?

We ask for the world to understand that the responsibility in the fight against this scourge cannot be focused on a single country, as has been attempted in the past with Colombia. We ask for international opinion to accept once and for all that, since drug-trafficking is a market governed by supply and demand, only by actively working against all the links in the chain of production, distribution and use of narcotics will we be able to find a definitive way out of the drug problem.

The three principles that, in our judgement, should guide a new global action in the fight against drugs are, thus, as follows. First, there is the principle of joint responsibility, whereby all countries in the world, without exception, are responsible for the drug problem. This leads to the need for multilateral action to combat the problem. Secondly, the principle of comprehensiveness, whereby this action must be directed at each and every one of the stages that the phenomenon comprises, from the moment the seed of an illegal crop is planted until it is sold and then consumed as a prepared drug anywhere in the world. And, lastly, there is the principle of multilateralism.

Finally, Colombia's vision of the drug problem has prevailed at significant international forums. At the last meeting of the Summit of the Americas, in Santiago, Chile, it became possible to leave behind unilateral and arbitrary judgements and accept a new view, which permitted the creation of a multilateral evaluation mechanism for countries' performance in the fight against drugs.

Thus, we have made great progress at the hemispheric level. But the fight cannot be national or continental. The fight requires global efforts. The young people of the world are expecting that this session will result in something more than rhetorical declarations of repentance and vague decisions of redress.

Colombia wishes to enunciate the bases of what should constitute an agenda for global action against drugs for the next 10 years, with specific agreements in some areas.

First, an agreement on the elimination of coca, poppy and marijuana crops through environmentally valid programmes for eradication and social substitution of illicit crops, with the adoption of satellite surveillance systems to verify the level of compliance with these commitments.

Second, an agreement on the control of production, shipping and use of chemical precursors used for drug processing and their destruction under environmentally safe conditions.

Third, an agreement on sea, air and land interdiction of drugs through electronic tracing systems and data exchange on world drug-distribution channels, wholesale and retail.

Fourth, an agreement to attack money- and asset-laundering and on the confiscation of property that has been acquired with profits from crime, through measures such as asset forfeiture and expropriation without compensation.

Fifth, the creation of a world fund for the fight against drugs with some of the monies resulting from these seizures, to be used for social substitution of crops, interdiction and prevention of use.

Sixth, an agreement to reduce levels of demand through prevention, health and education programmes and by fighting against crime, with the guaranteed and united participation of civil society.

Seventh, an agreement on legal cooperation for the exchange of evidence, intelligence data and drug traffickers in international prisons.

I must conclude by once again praising this gathering of all the countries of the world to find a joint strategy against the drug problem — something that my country has been insistently requesting for many years.

Colombia has been fighting against this scourge that affects the whole of mankind. Because of drugs, we have been demonized and we have been victimized through the application of unilateral measures that, like all intervention measures that offend our sovereignty, must be done away with forever.

As a result of that attitude, those intervention measures, I myself have paid dearly, both morally and personally.

I should like to share with you the very words used by President Lincoln in 1860 here in New York, at the Cooper Institute:

> "Neither let us be slandered from our duty by false accusations against us, nor frightened from it by menaces of destruction to the Government nor of dungeons to ourselves. Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith, let us, to the end, dare to do our duty as we understand it."

With this faith and this optimism we must keep fighting until the end, for our young people, against drugs; for the stability of our institutions, against drugs; for the transparency of our economies, against drugs; for the triumph of our principles and values, against drugs; and for an uncontaminated world, forever free from the destructive power of drugs.

Forty million Colombians are awaiting the results of this historic Assembly. Among them are many widows and orphans of officials and honest citizens who died in the fight against drug-trafficking. These victims know that their loved ones will never come home, but they know also that if a firm commitment emerges from this gathering to fight jointly the world's drug problem, it will be like planting flowers of hope on their tombs.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Colombia for his statement.

The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Emomali Rakhmonov, President of the Republic of Tajikistan.

President Rakhmonov (Tajikistan) (*interpretation from Russian*): On the threshold of the third millennium, no country can disregard the significant changes that are taking place throughout the world. One important aspect of this global process is the growing understanding of the need to fight against illegal drug-trafficking — the plague of the twentieth century — which has given rise to serious concern throughout the international community.

The last seven years of independence in my country have been marked by great difficulties in our history as we establish ourselves as a sovereign State. We have been making efforts to eliminate the consequences of the civil war. The peace process is becoming increasingly consolidated, we are trying to solve difficult socio-economic problems, and people are engaged in peaceful and creative work.

Unfortunately, in the wake of the civil war we faced another serious problem: illegal drug-trafficking. This problem not only threatens to make more difficult the process of establishing peace, security and stability in our country, but it is to a significant extent becoming a serious obstacle to the establishment of the statehood of an independent Tajikistan.

The particular features of our country's geopolitical situation, the consequences of the civil war, our weakening ability to protect our State borders and the weak logistical support our border mechanisms have for controlling drug-trafficking — all of this has created fertile ground for an increase in the activities of the

international drug mafia in Tajikistan and in our region as a whole.

Today Tajikistan faces the threat of being turned into a dangerous transit corridor for deliveries of drugs into the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and, from there, into Europe.

One of the main factors that has encouraged the flourishing of drug-trafficking in Tajikistan is the difficulties we are facing with respect to the period of transition and the sharp decline in the socio-economic situation in our country. We in Tajikistan are particularly disturbed over the non-medical use of drugs, which has led to an increase in crime, particularly among young people.

The spread of drug abuse and the increase in the price of drugs are creating favourable conditions for criminal structures to be built up in our country that carry on the organized marketing of drugs. For example, in 1991 we seized 10 kilogrammes of drugs overall; in 1997 we seized over four and a half tons; and in the first three months of 1998 we have seized just over one ton.

Accordingly, the Government of Tajikistan has prepared a national anti-drug strategy and short- and long-term programmes of action. We have made use of worldwide experience on how to combat drug abuse and trafficking, and we have also established a state commission on drug control. We have acceded to all the main international and regional anti-drug conventions and agreements, and we are continuing to develop our fruitful cooperation with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP). We are also formulating laws on the basis of recommendations from the UNDCP.

Tajikistan is party to two Programme drafts within the framework of the memorandum of mutual understanding on cooperation and control in the area of the illicit production and traffic of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and their precursors, concluded between the countries in the Central Asia region. We hope to be able to pool our efforts to combat this evil, not only at the level of our own region but also with the help of other interested countries and international organizations.

I should like to take this opportunity to appeal to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme to speed up the implementation of the special programme on developing a strategy and on controlling drugs and crime in Tajikistan.

Any further delay in implementing this programme will simply play into the hands of the drug barons, and more of our people will get drawn into this criminal trade. We firmly believe that this programme will make a significant contribution to peaceful cooperation and will support of our efforts to combat drug-trafficking.

From this rostrum, I have often spoken of our great interest in seeing a speedy solution to the Afghan conflict. We support the United Nations efforts in this area. We believe that effective measures to halt the flow into Afghanistan of "drug dollars" would help to solve the Afghan problem by alleviating the situation of permanent tension in the country. Unfortunately, because the internal conflict is unresolved and there is no central authority there, Afghanistan has become one of the largest suppliers of drugs in the world.

In resolving the vital issues related to the spread of the evil of drugs, we are enjoying growing support from international organizations and friendly countries. However, our general efforts in this area are not sufficient in themselves to allow us to react speedily and effectively to the rapidly evolving situation.

Unfortunately, Tajikistan is unable to deal with the drug mafia alone. It requires more active support and concrete help to close off the channels through which drugs are brought into our country. We need greater resources to bolster our struggle against the evil of drug addiction and the crimes connected to it.

I appeal to the world community to adopt urgent and immediate measures to provide real support for Tajikistan in furthering our peace process and strengthening the struggle against drug-trafficking and transit through our country. I would also appeal for help towards the economic and social recovery of our country and the establishment of an anti-drug "safety zone" around Afghanistan. We need to train highly qualified personnel in this field, develop ecologically safe methods of biological control over the destruction of opium poppy crops, and broaden our cooperation with international organizations and interested States in order to solve the problems related to the drug trade.

In conclusion, I wish to say that the leaders of Tajikistan are well aware of the catastrophic implications for our people of any indifference to the drug problem. We are facing a truly global danger and must unite our efforts to combat this well-organized crime, the most widespread and profitable in the history of the human

race. This will require every State individually and the international community as a whole to make genuine efforts to combat this scourge.

Tajikistan is open to fruitful cooperation with all international organizations and interested countries so that, together, we may fight drug-trafficking. We hope that the texts to be adopted by the participants in this special session of the General Assembly — the Political Declaration in particular — will be a real contribution to enhancing the effectiveness of the joint efforts of the world community to combat the dangers of drug abuse.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Tajikistan for his statement.

The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Emil Constantinescu, President of the Republic of Romania.

President Constantinescu (*interpretation from French*): Romania is deeply concerned by the problem of drugs, the topic of this special session of the General Assembly. Indeed, in the specific context of the Central and Eastern European societies, the dangers of drug-trafficking and abuse for all States of the world are compounded by the high risk of the veritable seizure by criminal networks of the tools essential to the building of new democracies in that part of Europe.

In shedding the constraints of communist dictatorship, together with a deepening of the globalization process, our countries have suddenly become vulnerable. The speed with which criminal organizations have set out to conquer new territories is in stark contrast to the necessarily slower rhythm of institutional development. Still fragile, the protection which the rule of law can offer from the perverse and toxic globalization of organized crime remains inadequate and legislation deficient, while civil society continues to react timidly.

Faced by these new dangers, our universe, which is already in upheaval, is threatened with serious backsliding in the absence of forceful and concerted action. That is why the Romanian State has initiated a threefold programme of defence: a strengthening of the legislative framework; reform of institutions; and, above all, intense educational action with a view to preventing the spread of drug addiction, especially among the young.

Romania has ratified all the United Nations conventions on international drug control, has joined all United Nations programmes in this field and will adopt without hesitation the resolutions of the current session. We rightly believe that it is only through international cooperation that the global scourge of the production, trafficking and distribution of drugs can be stopped.

That is why we have always acted domestically and in close collaboration with our neighbours in this field. In particular, we have improved and adapted our laws, and in this connection the assistance of the United Nations has been especially useful, for which I express my gratitude.

Following the political changes that occurred in Romania in late 1996, our country decided to initiate regional cooperation strategies in the fight against drug-trafficking, whose routes are in danger of becoming entrenched in our area and of turning the countries of Central and Eastern Europe from transit zones into consumer markets. Trilateral agreements with neighbouring countries are currently in force, while similar agreements have been concluded with most other Central and Eastern European countries and are ready for signing. The central thrust of each of these agreements is precisely on strengthening protections against organized crime.

This year, the city of Bucharest will host a regional conference on drug-trafficking. Among those invited are personalities from Central and Eastern Europe and representatives of the main specialized international bodies. I also wish to stress the special importance we attach to the establishment in Bucharest of the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative Centre, entrusted with the fight against corruption and organized crime.

These regional cooperation initiatives are driven by two imperatives. The first is effectiveness. Indeed, it is has been estimated that, by acting in cooperation with three or more participants, results can achieved in four or five years which, through bilateral agreements alone, would require no less than 48 years to be achieved.

Secondly, it is a question of system, as it is only by establishing complementary and successive barriers to illicit trafficking that the flow can be controlled. If traffickers must face six or seven border policemen who cooperate with each other and who exchange information regularly, it would be increasingly difficult for them to escape targeted controls intended to put an end to crime networks. The goal is therefore not to make borders airtight — which would be suicidal in the world we live in — but, rather, to bring about a more fluid circulation

of legal goods and honest people, all the while tightening the net efficiently and severely to stop criminals.

The security, prosperity and peace that we imagine to be the pillars of the twenty-first century will, in fact, be achievable only if we are able to act now in order to clear the path. We are convinced that the documents which we are to adopt at the end of this session will establish an appropriate framework in that direction.

At the same time, I wish to welcome the initiative just taken by President Clinton in the area of combating international crime, which speaks to these very concerns. Romania will adhere to it unreservedly and will continue to be active in the promotion and implementation of a similar strategy at the national and regional levels.

We now have, on the eve of the new millennium, the opportunity to establish a global policy and an unprecedented kind of human communication that will open the way to a future that we will be able to build freely and unhindered. This goal is at hand, if only we join forces.

The President: I thank the President of Romania for his statement.

The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Juan Carlos Wasmosy, President of the Republic of Paraguay.

President Wasmosy (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is a very great honour for me to participate in this special session of the United Nations at a time when, in accordance with the Constitution of my country, I am about to hand over to my successor the presidency of the Republic of Paraguay, on 15 August.

Thus, the General Assembly today gives me not only an honour, but also a good opportunity to bid farewell to this most important international body, in which I have had the good fortune to participate in various way in order to share the hopes, dreams and efforts my country has been conscientiously making with the aim of joining, rightfully and with dignity, the concert of modern and democratic nations of our time.

My farewell is therefore marked by a feeling of legitimate pride, as it is with genuine pleasure that I can say, that Paraguay — barely nine years after carrying out a radical political change that put an end to many decades of authoritarian regimes — has been able to establish a model of republican institutions with deep conviction and true democratic belief. Today, in 1998, this allows me to be the first civilian President of Paraguay chosen in legitimate elections to succeed in fulfilling his term of office. I shall also be the first to hand over the presidency to another elected civilian President, who was chosen by a large majority in elections that which were indisputably legitimate and transparent and that enjoyed more than 80 per cent participation, a very high level.

However, my personal enthusiasm over the resounding political event I am describing in not a mere gesture of self-satisfaction as a leader. I wanted to leave the Assembly with this statement as an assurance that in the Government and the people of Paraguay it will continue to have firm and resolute allies in the preservation of basic values, the protection and defence of which unite us in this forum. The issue that has brought us together demands of us firm and radical stances in the fight against one of the worst evils of our times, the perverse scourge that jeopardizes our possibilities for development and survival as modern and democratic nations.

In fact, the fight against trafficking in and illegal use of narcotics and other drugs cannot have the force and success that we so zealously pursue if they do not stem from legitimate and democratic Governments that are able to call together and mobilize our peoples around the great ideals that reflect the interests of the entire human race.

Ten years after the Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances came into force — one of the three international agreements that unite us in an all-out struggle against the production and trafficking of those substances that undermine the lives, minds, dreams and creativity of our young people and our societies — the initiative has been taken to hold this special session. My country has been involved in this since the beginning through the permanent mechanism for political consensus and consultation that we established in the Rio Group. In that mechanism our Governments undertook the commitment to assess the results of our efforts against a backdrop that has become increasingly complex due to the new and ever more perverse ways in which organized crime acts.

It is also worthwhile to underline here the decision taken at the second Summit of the Americas, which was held at Santiago, Chile, last April. There we agreed to join together under a hemispheric strategy to prevent and combat the drug problem and related crimes. There is of

course no doubt that cooperation between those countries and the always welcome contribution of the technical bodies of the United Nations — led by the International Narcotics Control Board — will substantially support the efficient handling of the problem at the national level.

I would therefore like to express clearly our support for all the technical and specialized agencies of the United Nations system. My country will continue to support them with concrete and resolute actions to effectively combat drug-trafficking. In this connection, it is fitting to recall the development of the national anti-drug strategy that was adopted at the end of 1996, and the promulgation in January 1997 of law 1015, which defines and punishes the crime of laundering money or assets that stem from illicit trafficking in narcotics, psychotropic substances or dangerous drugs.

Our presence here today bears witness to the decision taken by the Republic of Paraguay and the commitment of all Paraguayan society to wage an all-out battle against illegal drug-trafficking and its related crimes through the Government over which I have the honour to preside.

Allow me to reiterate here my thanks for the constant cooperation in all areas that we have received from the United Nations, and specifically in the area of combating drugs. I would also like to reassure the Assembly that Paraguay will continue to live up to its international commitments, in the full knowledge that its development, democracy, freedoms and general well-being depend on our providing an international framework for a healthy life together free from the damage and dangers of the production, trafficking and consumption of dangerous drugs.

On 15 August, I shall assume, by express constitutional mandate, the functions of Senator for Life in the Congress of my country. I firmly undertake that in my new functions I will make every effort in this struggle, and I fervently hope that it will succeed.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Paraguay.

The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency The Honourable Hubert A. Ingraham, MP, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas.

Mr. Ingraham (Bahamas): Nations large and small, developed and developing, have concentrated tremendous resources, both financial and human, in the continuing combat against drug barons, their accomplices and their facilitators. For all that effort, we have not won the war against the international production, manufacture, traffic in or consumption of illicit narcotic drugs.

This scourge continues to wreak havoc in cities, towns and communities around the world, destroying the quality of life of our people and the very security of our nations. In my country, the Bahamas, it has robbed us of our innocence, made violence far too common and the fear of violence a growing malaise. The message which the Bahamas wishes to bring to this important conference is simple and clear: illicit drugs affect us all.

The timing of this special session is most propitious. It comes at the threshold of a new millennium and in a climate of unprecedented globalization and trade liberalization which have, unintentionally, assisted the illegal drug trafficker. The escalation in the traffic of narcotics internationally is, unfortunately, being facilitated by the rapid expansion of international trade, improved production technologies and new, sophisticated methodologies employed in the transport and sale of illicit drugs.

The Bahamas is not a producer, manufacturer or major consumer of illicit drugs. This fact has not, however, spared us the calamity of the drug trade. Covering 80,000 square miles of ocean, the Bahamas comprises 700 islands which lie conveniently between the major producer and consumer markets for narcotic drugs. Our 290,000 citizens live on only 29 of these islands, which are located just off the coast of Florida, and are served by 22 international airports and 34 airstrips, hundreds of marinas and docks and innumerable natural harbours, inlets and coves. Not surprisingly, therefore, our islands have become a favoured route for the clandestine movement of drugs in the Americas.

We in the Bahamas know first-hand the debilitating effect of drugs on a country and on its people. Indeed, the crack cocaine epidemic manifested itself in our small nation among our young men and women, and the surviving victims of the scourge remain visible, even today.

We also know the devastating effects of drug corruption on a naive population. The wrecked careers of scores of otherwise law-abiding people — law enforcement officers, community leaders and professionals — who fell prey to the enticements of drug lords, as facilitators, users or both, are still fresh in our

national mind and in our personal experience. The imported violence associated with the drug trade, particularly the use of guns, has ravaged our country and destroyed an innocence which, as recently as 1970, knew no indigenous drug addict. We believed that the strong, traditional family unit and the social values which made us a happy, loving people would protect us from events outside our borders which were designed to create sadness and death.

We were wrong. The attraction of easy money, a life filled with unearned luxury and the lure of a quick "high" proved intoxicating for far too many of our people.

The Bahamas was poorly prepared to confront the effects of the drug trade. The wave of crime which accompanied and followed the massive invasion of our country by organized drug criminals quickly overwhelmed the limited resources of our police and defence forces. Admissions to drug rehabilitation centres, whose personnel grappled with the care and cure of cocaine addiction, climbed rapidly. Court calendars were quickly clogged as our small judicial service struggled to keep pace with the drug and drug-related criminal charges brought before them.

Since 1987 in particular, a massive counter-offensive campaign has been launched by the Government of the Bahamas, on its own and in cooperation with its neighbours, to bring an end to the invasion of our territory by drug mercenaries. The battles won, and being won, against drug-trafficking in and around the Bahamas are excellent examples of what international cooperation can do to counter the drug trade. Our losses in this war stand as glaring testimony to the vulnerabilities born of inadequate resources.

On the positive side, and as a result of numerous anti-drug-trafficking measures — including joint interdictions with the United States of America, such as Operation Bahamas Turks and Caicos and an agreement permitting Sea Rider, Hot Pursuit and Ship Rider exercises involving Bahamian law enforcement officials in joint operations with the American Coast Guard, Drug Enforcement Administration and Department of Defence personnel — the level of drug-trafficking through the Bahamas was reduced substantially. This trend was further strengthened by additional anti-drug legislation including laws against money-laundering.

In the Bahamas the number of new drug addicts seeking assistance also declined appreciably. We introduced and emphasized anti-drug education in our school system and in the local communities. This was combined with HIV/AIDS education because of the inevitable link between drug addiction and the incidence of HIV/AIDS.

By 1996 we believed that the drug menace had been halted. Marijuana and cocaine seizures had reached what we termed "irreducible levels", the number of new addicts had lessened and the court dockets contained fewer drug and drug-related cases.

But we had not, and have not, won the war against the drug traffickers. Drug criminals have proven to be resilient, flexible and sophisticated. Squeezed out of the Bahamas by the success of Operation Bahamas, Turks and Caicos, the drug traffickers for a while infiltrated small countries throughout the Caribbean chain and snuggled into Central America.

However, it now seems clear that reorganization among the drug cartels, the emergence of new drug groups, and the shift in resources around the Caribbean and away from the Bahamas and the southeastern border of the United States have resulted in a resurgence of drug-trafficking through the Bahamas.

We cannot allow the drug trafficker to hold sway again. To this end we urge all our partners in the anti-drug campaign to resist the temptation to withdraw or to relocate critical resources, but rather to maintain strength in all quarters in this fight.

The Bahamas continues to be a steadfast partner in the war against drug traffickers and money-laundering. In addition to our continued broad cooperation in anti-drug matters with the United States and our participation with our sister States members of the Caribbean Community in a wide range of anti-drug activities, the Bahamas has extended its drug interdiction efforts and drug-intelligence sharing with Cuba, another island-State, which lies immediately to the south of the Bahamas on the popular drug smuggling route between South and North America. This sharing is critical and must be accelerated for the benefit of all.

The Bahamas today spends nearly 15 per cent of its national budget on law enforcement matters, a situation largely influenced by the Government's anti-drug efforts. The purchase of patrol craft, the improvement of the quality and quantity of equipment available to land- and sea-based forces, the expansion and training of necessary personnel, the strengthening of the judicial and legal

services and the expansion of rehabilitation programmes stretch our resources beyond reasonable limits. It should not have to be so. We wish harm to none; we seek betterment for all.

The Bahamas fully endorses the proposals before us in the draft declaration on the guiding principles of demand reduction, the measures to promote judicial cooperation, the draft text on countering money-laundering, and the draft action plans, most of which are already in place in the Bahamas.

In the circumstances, the Bahamas wishes to offer for the consideration of the Assembly a plan that encompasses drug-demand reduction, effective resources intervention, timeliness of intelligence sharing, and established priorities for a framework for achieving compliance with drug-control conventions and agreements. The details to support these priorities have been enunciated in most, if not all, relevant United Nations reports in recent years. They include but are not limited to fundamental values, education, strengthening legitimate economies, broadening opportunities for citizens in national development, and enhancing manpower competence and commitment to nation-building.

It is the considered view of the Bahamas that this special session of the General Assembly will have value only if we convince the world that our recommitment to the eradication of this scourge is total and absolute. To this end the Bahamas is totally and absolutely committed.

The President: I thank the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas for his statement.

I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Armando Calderón Sol, President of the Republic of El Salvador.

President Calderón Sol (*interpretation from Spanish*): I wish first of all to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its twentieth special session, devoted to the world drug problem. My greetings go also to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan.

The presence and participation of many Heads of State or Government reflects the importance that this item has attained on the international agenda. We wish to convey our appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Ernesto Zedillo, President of Mexico, for his initiative in championing this special session to consider and adopt new measures to address the world drug problem.

This special session coincides with the tenth anniversary of the signing in 1988 of the United Nations Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, one of the most important instruments in this field.

El Salvador wishes to affirm its support for the work carried out by the United Nations through the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), as the principal instruments of the multilateral system for addressing the world drug problem in all its aspects.

There have been major international, regional and national efforts to fight drugs, but the desired results have yet to be achieved. Drugs are a global menace that endanger not only the lives, health and moral integrity of our citizens, but also the cohesion and stability of our social structures, public order and the legitimacy of our economic and political institutions. The time has come to put an end to rhetoric and begin more concrete, effective action against this scourge of mankind. The international community demands that we adopt a firmer and more determinant role in preserving the life, health and moral integrity of our peoples.

We endorse the guiding principles set out in the draft political declaration and its annexes, among which I would highlight the principle of the shared responsibility of the entire international community, whose action should be based on a comprehensive and balanced approach to the drug problem that accords with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and with international law.

All countries should, to the best of their ability, support the United Nations by providing greater resources, so that the Organization's drug-control organs can wage a more effective fight against drugs with the same energy the United Nations devotes to promoting world peace. Efforts should be focused on coordinating actions and developing new strategies that will put an effective end to the expansion of the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and related activities.

We in El Salvador are making efforts to fight drug activities, and are achieving positive results against organized crime; this demonstrates our willingness to fight this social evil to the maximum.

At the legal level, our legislative assembly is considering constitutional reforms that would facilitate the signing of treaties for the extradition of criminals linked to drug activity, as well as a bill against the laundering of money and other assets. At the educational level we are undertaking preventive programmes. In the financial field we must undertake joint efforts to appropriately control banking institutions and the fiscal havens that facilitate asset-laundering.

We propose that Member States not only renew their willingness and obligation to implement commitments they have entered into by signing relevant international instruments, but also that we make a solemn commitment to apply the strategies that we here adopt in order to reduce drug addiction substantially and to fight against all the drug-related criminal activities.

We support the Secretary-General's efforts — as part of the reform process of the United Nations — to consolidate the necessary institutional changes in order to improve effectiveness in the fight against drugs.

Lastly, on the eve of the new millennium, we have an opportunity to test our political wills as leaders to unite here in the world Organization and work together for the eradication of the drug problem.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of El Salvador not only for his statement but also for the observance of the time limit. He was the first president this afternoon who finished his statement while the green light was still on. Congratulations to you, Mr. President.

The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Teodoro Obiang Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

President Obiang Mbasogo (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the pleasure and great honour to be here today to tell of the commitment of the Government and people of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea to help in the efforts of the international community to eradicate the scourge of drugs from our countries and from the world as a whole.

This summit of heads of State and Government is taking place at an opportune moment, when all the world's Governments realize that drug-trafficking and drug use not only destabilize families but also destroy youth, degrade men and provoke the social disorders, terrorism and upheaval that many countries are suffering from today.

Thus we are participating in this session with the desire and willpower to adopt recommendations that will put into action global strategies to combat this thorny problem and its effects, so as to preserve the health and life of our peoples.

We warmly congratulate His Excellency Mr. Ernesto Zedillo, President of the United Mexican States, on his initiative to use international cooperation to combat the serious problem of illicit trafficking in drugs and psychotropic substances, and also in dealing with related problems which are currently of great concern throughout the world.

Indeed, the extent of illicit drug and narcotic trafficking is such that Governments today feel powerless to control it by themselves. Thus, cooperation and joint action by all Governments is needed in order to hold back this tide with its unforeseeable reach and consequences.

We also appreciated the diligence with which Secretary-General Kofi Annan agreed to and convened this special session of the General Assembly, thereby giving this matter the priority it deserves.

We also appreciate the actions taken by the United States Government to repress the production and illegal trafficking in drugs in this hemisphere. We believe that exchanges of experiences and of technology among States are essential to the fight against this evil and to reduce its devastating effects.

Concerned by this situation, the Government of Equatorial Guinea has never ceased to contribute to the efforts of the international community. It has acceded to all the international instruments that deal with drug control. It is now vigorously fighting against the proliferation and use of narcotics in Equatorial Guinea, following the adoption, in September of 1993, of bill number 3 prohibiting the production, sale and consumption of and illicit trafficking in drugs.

At the subregional level, along with the 10 other member States of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, Equatorial Guinea has made a commitment to strengthening domestic mechanisms for combating illicit narcotics trafficking at the national and subregional levels. This commitment was made at a meeting held in Libreville from 28 to 30 April of this year.

In this regard, our States have undertaken to improve monitoring on our common land, air and sea borders, in order to ensure adequate control and broad detection of drugs. At the same time, we decided to direct all action to eradicating the related scourges of illicit arms trafficking in Central Africa and of laundering of drug-trafficking money. This commitment will soon be one of the main principles of action of the Central African States.

I should point out that our policies for combating drugs on the national and subregional levels will not be successful unless they enjoy the full cooperation and effective assistance of the international community as a whole. This sensitive area of combatting drug-trafficking requires that States truly come together and make inter-institutional efforts. After all, drugs do not respect our territorial boundaries. They threaten the very survival of our societies, the sovereignty of our States and the efforts that we are making to build democratic societies.

Today, in many countries, poverty and weak social and economic structures mean that often people involved in agriculture are easily sidetracked towards producing drugs. In this respect, and in order for the fight against drugs to succeed, we need to wage a more active and participatory struggle against poverty, illiteracy and the absence of technology in the world and in Africa in particular.

Some political forces, in attempting to destabilize Governments, use weapons bought with drug money. They engage in terrorism, physically eliminating innocent citizens. Concretely speaking, recent incidents in my country, such as the detention of a ship full of armed mercenaries in Angola in May 1997, and violent attacks by a group of terrorists on military installations and on the civilian population on the island of Bioko on 21 January last, in which innocent people were killed. were acts carried out by hardened criminals — drug traffickers and drug addicts.

For that reason, we must undertake to adopt more rigorous measures to sanction banking institutions involved in laundering drug money and prohibit them from encouraging such activities. In this respect, it would seem useful for the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report on the causes of conflict in Africa — that the names of arms traffickers be published — to apply also to drug traffickers and to the institutions involved in this despicable trade.

To this end, major media worldwide could play a determining role in broadcasting information on the illegal traffic of drugs. But we also need to take steps to harmonize our legislative instruments in order to encourage an exchange of information that would allow us to suppress and arrest those drug dealers.

It is intolerable that, on the eve of the twenty-first century, the powers of evil that control and are involved in the drug trade should mortgage our hopes for building a better world for humankind. Let us pool our efforts to come up with joint measures that will allow us to eradicate drugs from the face of the earth.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea for his statement.

The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Burhanuddin Rabbani, President of the Islamic State of Afghanistan.

President Rabbani *(spoke in Afghan; English text furnished by the delegation):* With your permission, I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to express my most sincere gratitude to those Member States and international and non-governmental organizations that have provided urgent assistance to my countrymen, affected by the earthquakes of 4 February and 30 May 1998. I am also thankful to those Member States that have projected to provide humanitarian aid in the near future.

Allow me at the outset to quote Mr. Kofi Annan, who has described in a succinct and eloquent manner the extent of the damage narcotic drugs continue to inflict on human beings:

> "Today there are an estimated 190 million drug users around the world. No country is immune. And alone, no country can hope to stem the drug trade within its borders. The globalization of the drug trade requires an international response."

Afghanistan is home to a Muslim nation. Islam teaches us that reason and intellect are gifts of God. Anything that can harm the mind or body or inflict injury on humankind, whether in a Muslim or non-Muslim society, is therefore forbidden. We consider it our Islamic duty to fight the production and trafficking of all harmful narcotics, including illicit drugs.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan fully shares the concern of the international community over drug abuse, which continues to jeopardize the lives of over 1 million

users globally and adds to the spread of disease and drug-related crimes. We fully expect this special session of the General Assembly to rightfully lead to the adoption of a comprehensive and global programme of action that will enable us to viably guarantee a drug-free world, particularly at the dawn of the next millennium.

We are aware of the significance of the current session and reaffirm our unwavering determination and commitment to the implementation of the political declaration and other relevant documents prepared by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs for this special session of the General Assembly. Afghanistan is a typical case, where a proxy war is financed mainly by a "tax" on the production of narcotics, with the cooperation of cross-border traffickers.

Afghanistan is a party to the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, the 1971 United Nations Convention on Psychotropic Substances and the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. In addition to endorsing numerous international treaties, Afghanistan has promulgated several laws in the combat against the illicit trafficking, smuggling and abuse of drugs in our country.

The poppy has traditionally been cultivated on a small scale in Afghanistan. In 1972, long before foreign military intervention, the total annual opium production was estimated at 200 metric tons, which at that time was used in part for medical purposes. Unfortunately, the events of the past two decades have culminated in the disappearance of security and administrative structures in certain parts of the country. Foreign-sponsored proxy wars and the lack of a consolidated preventive programme continue to create suitable conditions for poppy cultivation and its expansion in different regions, particularly the eastern and southern provinces of Afghanistan, currently ruled by the Taliban.

Farmers have also been encouraged by the Taliban to engage in massive poppy cultivation for "addicting infidels" and financing the Taliban war machine. In addition, cross-border drug dealers, working closely with certain regional elements and institutions, continue to influence and encourage farmers to grow poppies.

The illicit production, traffic and abuse of drugs is currently one of the most serious problems facing the international community. The phenomenon has transnational dimensions that require an effective and well-coordinated international response, particularly within the United Nations system. However, any action or response must be carried out so as not to interfere with the sovereignty of States and the norms and principles of international law and to avoid intervention in the internal affairs of States.

One cannot turn a blind eye to the symmetry that exists between the extraordinary increase in drug production and the rise of the Taliban. According to latest United Nations figures, Taliban drug production now accounts for more than 96.3 per cent of the total Afghan output. For the first time in the history of Afghanistan and the region, a joint venture with the Taliban in promoting poppy cultivation and providing overseas market access and export traffic has been initiated. The Taliban, in total defiance of all international norms and standards, openly levy a "tax" on the cultivation and export of poppies.

Furthermore, to finance their infernal war machine, the Taliban are using refineries recently transported into Afghanistan in order to convert raw opium into heroine, whereas we all know that the major refineries are stationed across the border. This mercenary group continues to encourage poppy production and issues permits allowing drug smugglers free passage across the frontiers of Afghanistan in exchange for a "tax". This instrument of tyranny continues to flout and violate all international human rights instruments and to thwart any peace process.

It is our firm conviction that reduction in the demand for and consumption of drugs would be an important step towards coping with the global production of and traffic in drugs. The magnitude of the drug problem and the collective capacity of the international community to deal with it should be effectively commensurate and efficiently coordinated. In this connection, the action of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and its role as a system-wide coordinator are commendable. The effectiveness of drug control efforts would ultimately diminish if the UNDCP budget were to face a deficit, which could ultimately lead to paralysis. Any introduction by the UNDCP of a substitute crop for poppy would demand persistence and follow-up support. Unfinished and incomplete projects and schemes would have an adverse impact. An innovative approach to assisting UNDCP could help that organization find new sources of financial support.

Furthermore, the creation of sustainable social and economic opportunities through integrated rural

development, including infrastructure development, would significantly help to improve the living conditions of the communities and villages affected by illicit opium cultivation. Many people would be able to find other, lawful means of earning a living.

We believe that, until peace and normalcy return, drug production and trafficking will progressively increase in Afghanistan. It is only through the implementation of the peace process initiated by the United Nations that tangible progress towards the restoration of peace and normalcy can be made. We also believe that there is a direct correlation between the peace process and the participation of the population in the political destiny of our country. All of this will help us not only to bring peace to Afghanistan, but also to start rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, which would mark a first step in reversing the progressive increase of drug production in and export from Afghanistan.

On the basis of the concept of shared global responsibility as a concerted approach, I call upon the international community and financial institutions to help us in our campaign for peace, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. Rural development measures in the context of sustained national economic growth and sustainable development efforts would pave the way for the eradication of poverty and for long-term, lawful, viable and sustainable economic options as alternatives to illicit drug cultivation.

To achieve such lofty goals, the Islamic State of Afghanistan welcomes the investment of international financial institutions and regional development banks, which will act as a catalyst to an early return of peace. We welcome all projects designed to use Afghan soil as the transit area for the extension of pipeline projects, which would generate revenue for the people and reduce the number of the unemployed, now soaring above 90 per cent. Such projects would in turn attract more investment in a country that continues to have enormous untapped resources.

Judicial cooperation, the extradition of traffickers and other drug-crime perpetrators, mutual legal assistance and the transfer of proceedings would certainly help the common efforts of the international community in its fight against narcotics. We are ready to take part in these collective endeavours in order to achieve a world free of drugs and drug abuse on the threshold of the next millennium.

The President: I thank the President of the Islamic State of Afghanistan for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Izzet Rustamov, Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Rustamov (Azerbaijan) (*interpretation from Russian*): Mr. President, first of all, may I congratulate you sincerely and wholeheartedly on your unanimous election to the presidency of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly. I feel sure that under your wise and able guidance this session will successfully carry out all of its historic tasks.

On the eve of the new millennium, mankind is facing the drug problem, which has acquired global dimensions and now affects every nation and every people throughout the world. The problem constitutes a particular threat to newly independent States, including Azerbaijan, which is experiencing the difficulties of a transitional period in the social and economic spheres.

Moreover, Azerbaijan's situation is complicated by the fact that it is located at the junction of Europe and Asia, which makes it attractive to drug dealers as one of the drug transit routes from East to West. Another factor is that 20 per cent of our territory is occupied by Armenia and there are over one million refugees and displaced persons. As a result of all this, 130 kilometres along the southern border of Azerbaijan is not under the control of our customs, border guard and other law enforcement agencies. This situation contributes to the territory being used as a transit corridor for drugs into our region and then into Europe. It is common knowledge that there is a close interrelationship between the drug business and terrorism, smuggling and the illicit arms trade.

This problem was highlighted in the Baku Accord and the final document of the thirty-second session of the Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East, which was held in the capital of Azerbaijan in February 1997. The Baku Accord laid the foundation for further strengthening international cooperation to effectively combat the drug problem in the region. It condemned the violation of national borders and territorial integrity of States. It also condemned foreign occupation, which undermines efforts in the struggle against illicit drug-trafficking. Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/39 urged Member States to take all necessary measures to implement the provisions of the Baku Accord.

Addressing the drug problem in Azerbaijan is one of the top priorities in our State policy. By decree of the President of Azerbaijan, Mr. Heydar Aliyev, a State drug control commission for the struggle against drug addiction and illicit drug-trafficking has been established. and a national programme and draft legislation were elaborated. The President of Azerbaijan also made a key statement at the thirty-second session of the Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East.

I am pleased to be able to add that Azerbaijan acceded to the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988. Today, the Milli Mejlis, the parliament of our country, is considering the question of Azerbaijan's acceding to the 1961 and the 1971 Conventions.

Comprehensive measures taken by the leadership of Azerbaijan have facilitated stability, strengthened law and order and decreased crime in the country. The uncompromising fight we have been waging against drugs has yielded some results. The last five years have seen an increase in our investigation of a number of drug-related crimes. We have also identified more drug addicts and we have seized more illegal drugs.

The reduction of demand is important in reducing drug-trafficking. Mass media and public awareness measures are important here. So is education, especially for young people. We also need effective treatment and social rehabilitation for drug addicts. Unfortunately, the lack of financial resources is preventing us from fully carrying out all of the projects we have in these areas. I would appeal to the United Nations and other international organizations and donor States to provide all possible assistance to the Azerbaijan Republic in this area.

Azerbaijan is actively cooperating with many bodies and agencies in the United Nations system. We appreciate their ongoing attention and support. I would like to thank the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention and its Executive Director Mr. Pino Arlacchi for their cooperation and assistance.

Greater assistance to Azerbaijan would help us to achieve real results in combating illicit drug-trafficking at the national and regional levels. This assistance would be particularly important because the border guards and the customs service of our young Azerbaijani State do not have the experience they need in dealing with drug crimes, and they do not have adequate logistical backup. These problems create serious difficulties for us when we are trying to block drug traffickers.

Azerbaijan fully agrees with the ideas and objectives of the reform programme submitted by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan. We especially appreciate those ideas relating to the item under discussion today. Here, I would stress that the establishment of the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention has led to an enhanced dialogue between Member States and more concerted efforts by the specialized agencies in combatting crime, illicit drug-trafficking and international terrorism.

Today, nobody doubts that no country can solve the drug problem on its own. Azerbaijan fully supports the draft Political Declaration before us today, and we should like to say that we are prepared to fulfil in good faith all of the commitments set forth in that document. This will give us an opportunity to prove in deeds, not just in words, that we all possess the will and the ability to fight together against this evil. It is our sacred duty for the sake of future generations.

The President: I thank the Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jan-Erik Enestam, Minister of the Interior of Finland.

Mr. Enestam (Finland): I have the pleasure to address this special session on behalf of Finland.

First, I wish to support the statement made by the Deputy Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, John Prescott, on behalf of the European Union.

My Government welcomes this special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem. The Governments that we see here are committed as a unified world community to conveying in strong terms a common signal of our resolve to fight against one of the most serious problems of our time: the international drug problem. A balanced approach that addresses both the demand and the supply aspects is needed. On the demand reduction side, we should take advantage of modern technology and engage young people in the prevention of drug abuse.

The changes in our regional neighbourhood have added to our awareness of the global nature of the world drug problem. To prevent a negative prognosis of the world drug problem, a response is required on a global scale. The United Nations system provides the comprehensive framework to discuss, to find the resolve and to adopt common measures and guidelines to tackle this problem. In this context we acknowledge the important role of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and support the efforts to strengthen it and the Vienna Office in order to combat organized international crime.

International estimates of the volume of money-laundering vary. In very broad terms, the total value of resources derived from illegal sources and being filtered to legally controlled financial markets may lie somewhere between $100 billion and $500 billion. In coming to grips with international organized crime, a major share of which is related to drug-related illegal activities, instruments permitting the disclosure and confiscation of resources of criminal organizations should be developed.

These organizations operate on an increasingly worldwide scale at a time when many obstacles still hamper Government-to-Government cooperation. To give an example: national legislation constitutes the basis of measures aimed at preventing money-laundering, when the only really effective way to tackle this grave problem should be from the global perspective. On the basis of the 1988 Convention, regional agreements on preventing money-laundering have been drawn up, but on a global scale activities and measures to prevent money-laundering operations should be taken further.

The Political Declaration which we will adopt here provides authoritative support for such development. The United Nations convention against organized transnational crime, presently under negotiation, should include important sections concerning the confiscation of illegally gained resources and the prevention of money-laundering. Finland has gained positive experience from regionally based cooperation. We cooperate actively with the Nordic countries, in the European Union and in the Baltic Sea Task Force.

My Government warmly supports the measures aimed at strengthening international judicial cooperation in combating illegal drug-trafficking and drug abuse. By removing obstacles to judicial cooperation, more effective results can be achieved than would be possible through measures tending exclusively to, for example, the harmonization of material criminal law.

The Finnish legislation on international cooperation to combat drug abuse covers the technique of controlled deliveries. We find it important to increase and facilitate the application of this instrument.

More international consideration needs to be given to the examination of new investigative techniques, with the idea of balancing the need for effective cooperation and respect for human rights. To complement the 1988 United Nations Convention, there is a need to improve legal measures on the protection of witnesses.

Finland welcomes the demand reduction Declaration as an outstanding achievement. Finnish drug policy remains closely linked with the basic principles of national welfare policy. Social harm and health damage connected to drug abuse are best prevented by influencing peoples' living conditions and lifestyles. It is especially important to offer young people sound and gratifying alternatives to drugs. Young people are well aware of the new patterns of communications. We are looking forward to opportunities being created through the expanding use of informatics.

Although drug problems vary from one country to another, information technology can find a multitude of applications, depending on distinctive features of societies and differences in cultural traditions. In Finland the introduction of new applied high technology is proceeding successfully.

Finland has launched a prevention-network programme. Through the programme, materials are being produced in several European countries to be used to balance inappropriate or false information on drugs. Cooperative links have been established between non-governmental organizations, Government and local authorities in several European countries and on a tentative basis with United Nations International Drug Control Programme and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. In 1999, Finland will organize an international conference on information and communication technology which could be applied to drug prevention. Representatives from all continents will be invited to this conference.

My Government is fully committed to the successful outcome of this special session.

The President: I thank the Minister of the Interior of Finland for his statement. I would also like to thank him for observing the time limit.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Murat Başesgioğlu, Minister of the Interior of Turkey.

Mr. Başesgioğlu (Turkey) (*spoke in Turkish; English text furnished by the delegation*): I am very pleased to participate in this review of the global polices and trends relating to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. We welcome this opportunity as a timely effort to deal with a global menace.

It is an indisputable fact that a multi-dimensional problem with an annual financial profile of an estimated $400 billion adversely affects the economic and social structures, as well as the security, of almost all countries. We regard the problem of drug abuse to be a multifaceted issue which requires a global drug control system. A global challenge of this magnitude can be dealt with effectively only by concerted international action. The United Nations represents the only focal point for the coordination and direction of our collective efforts.

Turkey supports the Secretary-General's bold initiatives for reform, particularly in the field of drugs and crime prevention. We also welcome the leadership of the new Executive Director, Mr. Pino Arlacchi, in establishing a more effective and action-oriented centre to address all aspects of the drug problem. Our approach to the problem of drugs is entirely in line with this multidimensional policy.

We thank the Government of Mexico for initiating the process that has resulted in this special session and for its significant contributions to its successful outcome.

Turkey regards the draft political declaration before the Assembly at this session as an expression of a universal commitment to create a more cooperative political climate in our battle with this global menace. For its part, Turkey will do its share on the international and domestic fronts, through bilateral and multilateral cooperation, to achieve the balanced objectives set forth in the draft political declaration.

The concept of providing drugs to drug addicts has serious medical and social consequences that cannot be overlooked. We are concerned that such utilization creates an environment that is permissive with regard to the free supply and abuse of drugs. Allowing the use of drugs for specific treatment purposes, we believe, must be accompanied by a firm determination on the part of Governments to reduce demand in their respective countries. There is a need for more effective demand-control policies in developed countries. It would not be realistic to expect international control mechanisms to attain their objectives without a reduction in demand.

There is also a need for more efficient control of precursor substances such as acetic anhydride. Regrettably, the lack of sufficient measures to prevent the diversion of these substances into illicit channels by producers results in their ending up in illegal laboratories where they are converted to heroin and are then trafficked across frontiers. We are very much affected by such diversions. While we are taking comprehensive measures to address this problem, we believe that the producers should also share responsibility and make every effort to control the export of precursor substances.

Another concern relates to the challenge posed by the closely interconnected threats of illicit drugs, organized crime and international terrorism. The question of coordination within the United Nations system regarding this interlinked problem on our agenda must also be a top priority of this Organization. This linkage is one of the major factors that contribute to the continuation of illicit drug-trafficking over my country's territory.

It is common knowledge that the proceeds of drug-trafficking serve as a major financial source for certain terrorist groups. Unfortunately, my country has to deal with a terrorist group which openly engages in drug-trafficking. As the minister responsible for combatting illicit drug-trafficking as well as terrorism, I urge those Administrations which condone terrorists to consider the future well-being of their own societies too, and to amend their policies. I also appeal to the Secretary-General to support the Executive Director's efforts to establish an effective programme within the United Nations system of measures aimed at the linkage among illicit trafficking of drugs, arms smuggling and terrorism.

According to the 1961 Single Convention, Turkey is one of the two traditional suppliers of poppy straw in the world. Since 1974, Turkey has adopted the world's safest yet most expensive method of producing poppy straw. To date, there has been no diversion from our licit production, and our practice is referred to as an exemplary way of producing opiate raw material by the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB). We expect

all countries producers of raw materials, psychotropic substances and precursors to follow suit. We hope that after this special session, the INCB will be better disposed to provide information on the new responsibilities to be undertaken by suppliers of precursors, raw materials and psychotropic substances. We also hope to see long-term policies against terrorist organizations and against their role in illicit drug-trafficking and marketing.

All nations represented here are duty-bound by a moral obligation towards future generations: that the youth and lives of our young ones should not be lost in the desolate wasteland of drug addiction. It is incumbent on us all to provide them with a drug-free, healthy and safe environment. We can succeed in giving our children and youth such a future only if we are prepared to unite our efforts and are willing to share the burden and live up to our commitments.

The President: I thank the Minister of the Interior of Turkey for his statement and for observing the time limit.

I now give the floor to the Federal Minister of the Interior of Austria, His Excellency Mr. Karl Schlögl.

Mr. Schlögl (Austria): Austria takes particular interest in this special session of the General Assembly. Due to the geographic location of my country, Austria, and its proximity to major transport routes for illicit drugs, the Austrian Government attaches special importance to international drug control.

Austria is convinced that transnational crime can be fought only by joint action based on the principle of shared responsibility. The Austrian Government firmly supports international efforts in the fight against the illicit drug problem, whether in the framework of international police cooperation through the channels of Europol or Interpol, or among the States signatories of the Schengen agreement, or in the context of world-wide cooperation under the aegis of the United Nations.

Vienna is proud to host the headquarters of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP). Austria fully supports the valuable work carried out by UNDCP. In this context, I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to the Director General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, Under-Secretary-General Pino Arlacchi, and to his staff for the preparation of this special session.

Thanks to the initiative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and to the leadership of Mr. Arlacchi, Vienna has gained a high profile as the centre of the United Nations fight against "uncivil society". In view of the magnitude and complexity of the world drug problem, national, regional, local and international cooperation to fight this evil will all have to be intensified. This also includes a significant strengthening of international drug-control bodies.

Let me now turn to the objectives of the special session. Constructive negotiations under the able leadership of the representative of Portugal have produced considerable results. We can proudly point out that we have succeeded in agreeing on new and concrete targets, political guidelines and action programmes. It is now up to us to ensure that these commitments will be implemented, and to convey this progress to the citizens of our countries.

Compared to other, more harshly affected, countries, Austria has remained relatively untouched by serious drug-related crime. The Austrian authorities have largely managed to come to grips with dangerous developments at an early stage. I will not give credit for this success only to our law enforcement institutions. The most significant reason for the low rate of drug-related crime in our country is certainly the fact that Austria has seen social stability and continuous economic growth over the past five decades. A society that is marked by solidarity and prosperity provides the best basis for a successful multisectoral policy against drug-related crime and drug abuse. This is, I believe, also a convincing argument for an integrated United Nations policy where the fight against illicit drugs is part of overall efforts to foster social and economic development.

However, hazardous international developments do not bypass Austria. We have to focus on stemming the supply of our illegal drug market via the Balkan routes. We also have to counter the threat of synthetic drugs.

Austrian drug policy is based on a "two-pillar mode". While we are fighting drug-related crime in an efficient manner, we believe that the drug problem cannot be solved by law enforcement alone. Addiction and dependence are primarily medical problems which require a medical as well as therapeutic approach. As an alternative to penalties, the concept of therapy instead of punishment for drug addicts is part of the Austrian anti-

drug strategy. The drug addict is provisionally given the chance of treatment, with the aim of full social integration.

However, with regard to crimes related to drug dealing, criminal law is fully applied. The Austrian fight against transnational organized drug-trafficking is guided by the principle of zero tolerance for serious drug traffickers.

In the second half of this year, Austria will assume the Council Presidency of the European Union (EU). During the Austrian Presidency we will continue to pave the way for an EU drug strategy after 1999. Moreover, Austria will probe the new opportunities offered by the Treaty of Amsterdam in the field of drug control.

We intend to intensify cooperation with the Central and Eastern European countries by making use of the potential of the pre-accession partnership arrangements. The Austrian Presidency will attempt to further develop EU cooperation with third countries in the fight against the drug problem on a worldwide scale. Our plans also aim at the adequate implementation of the commitments we have taken up in the framework of this special session at the European level. This concerns, *inter alia*, measures with regard to demand reduction or to alternative development, including the relevant target dates. Until the year 2003 and the year 2008, respectively, these recommendations ought to be put into practice in a consistent way.

This special session impressively reflects the worldwide consensus reached on an integrated approach to the fight against the global drug problem, renewing the political will to take effective measures. After this world summit, we ought to direct our attention to following up on our commitments in a concrete manner.

The Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Demand Reduction should be implemented through the development of an international action programme, as a comprehensive multidisciplinary outline. In this endeavour we also should consult and involve various players from civil society.

Our decisions have to be supported by a systematic international monitoring system. The fast and well-balanced implementation of the recommendations adopted at this special session of the Assembly is one of Austria's greatest concerns.

The President: I thank the Federal Minister of the Interior of Austria for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Dumiso Dabengwa, Minister of Home Affairs of Zimbabwe.

Mr. Dabengwa (Zimbabwe): I also feel most honoured to be able to represent my country in the discussion of this most important subject: drug control.

The production, distribution and abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and related activities indeed deserve international attention, as evidenced by the convening of this special session on the subject. I believe it is safe to assume that no nation is immune to this scourge, and it would be foolhardy to pretend otherwise.

The need to stand united in the face of the challenges posed by drug-trafficking has never been more imperative. We cannot afford to watch while economies and societies continue to be harmed by this menace. That some countries are centres of production while others are transit points or markets does not make any material difference in this age of globalization. Failure by the international community to cooperate fully will only enable the drug barons to effectively exploit such weaknesses to maximum advantage.

We in Zimbabwe and southern Africa, in realization of the seriousness of the problem, have taken a number of initiatives in dealing with the production, distribution and abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. Zimbabwe has ratified the three United Nations Conventions: the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs as amended by the 1972 Protocol, the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances and the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. This is because we realize that drug cartels and syndicates have a global influence and have become agents of destabilization and a threat to the socio-economic and political order of every country in the world.

Within the subregion, Zimbabwe is a signatory to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) protocol on combating drug abuse and illicit trafficking of 1996. Zimbabwe is also a member of and hosts the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization, which seeks to foster regional integration and cooperation in the fight against all forms of cross-border crime, including the key area of drug-trafficking. The Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization is currently actively involved in the

coordination of training and joint operations targeting crimes of concern. Drug-trafficking within the southern African region is certainly high on the agenda in both training and joint operations.

In line with its commitments to the United Nations conventions and the SADC protocol on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, the Government of Zimbabwe is doing all it can to honour its obligations in this regard. In November 1997 a workshop was convened and came up with a framework for the development of a national drug control master plan for Zimbabwe. Inputs to the framework came from various ministries, non-governmental organizations and international organizations. The framework is now being used by local consultants as a basis for the development of the master plan. It is hoped that by the end of 1998 Zimbabwe will have its own national drug control master plan in place. The plan will address the issues of control and reduction of supply, suppression of illicit trafficking and reduction of illicit demand through prevention, treatment and rehabilitation, as well as the harmonization of sectoral strategies.

These efforts have to be synchronized with local legislation in order for them to bear meaningful results. It is my hope that other States are moving in the same direction and that we will see more evidence of effective cooperation and coordination of enforcement efforts, which have previously been mere ideals. The existing regional and international frameworks need to be further strengthened and should be buttressed by continuous training and development of drug enforcement agents.

In a bid to enhance capacity to deal with the drug problem from the angle of enforcement, Zimbabwe is currently formatting its Drug Law Enforcement Strategy to bring about an efficient, effective and systematic approach in drug law enforcement. Anticipated outputs of the strategy include enhanced detection and seizure levels, a systematic, rationalized and proactive approach, and improved coordination and cooperation at the national, regional and international levels.

Cannabis sativa is easily the biggest problem in terms of both abuse and trafficking in our country. It is the most prevalent drug in Zimbabwe and is very cheap, to the extent that both youth and unemployed people can afford it and do abuse it.

The International Narcotics Control Board recently mentioned that a new hybrid cannabis variety has been introduced that will have a higher THC content than the local varieties. But regrettably, this drug is legalized in some developed countries.

We therefore welcome the United Nations political declaration urging the International Drug Control Programme to include cannabis in its general global strategy with a view to its elimination as an illicit cultivated crop. Our police, using its own resources, has fought continuously, through the seizure and destruction of crops, to stop the distribution and trafficking of cannabis.

In conclusion, I wish to pay tribute to the conveners of this session for affording us this opportunity not only to share our experiences but also to gain more insight into the problem of drugs, in order to strengthen our ties and forge international cooperation on matters pertaining to the fight against the production, distribution and abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

The President: I thank the Minister of Home Affairs of Zimbabwe for his statement.

I give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable K. D. Knight, Minister of National Security and Justice of Jamaica.

Mr. Knight (Jamaica): Much has already been said about the scourge of the illicit drug trade and its destructive effects on individuals, families, communities and nations.

The trade has in recent years formed an unholy alliance with other criminal pursuits. One of the most troubling of these linkages is that with the illicit arms trade, particularly the trade in small arms. The illicit arms trade has contributed to the entrenchment of the drug trade and to making guns and drugs a double-barrelled force of evil and mayhem in our societies.

The linkage between arms and drugs has resulted in a frightening escalation of violence and violent crimes. This has seriously undermined the peace and security of many countries and will increasingly threaten the stability of these States as well as international security. We are therefore pleased that, within the Americas, the bold step of adopting the Inter-American Convention against Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials has been taken.

The pattern and scale of violence that have resulted from the dramatic rise in illicit drug-related activity have unleashed a new level of terror in our societies. In addition, the movement of drugs and guns across borders has made this problem even more complex. We call upon those States which are producers of arms to exercise more rigid control and accountability over the export of arms for illicit ends — the same degree of control which countries like Jamaica are called upon to exercise over the production, cultivation and export of illicit drug crops.

Indeed, the time has come for those States which are manufacturers of arms to significantly reduce the production and export of weapons, save for those required for defence, security and legitimate sporting activities.

Jamaica welcomes the draft Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development. We strongly believe that sustainable programmes for alternative development and crop substitution must be put in place to complement crop-eradication exercises. Given a choice, many of the farmers involved in drug-crop cultivation would cease. Theirs is an involvement exacerbated by a combination of poverty and the negative impact of the international trading system on the traditional agricultural sectors in their countries. Then there is the seemingly insatiable demand for these illicit drugs, a demand which must be tackled with renewed vigour.

The Jamaican Government urges the international community to back its verbal commitment for alternative development with tangible, practical support and innovative programmes.

Our focus in these forums must always be on the question of illicit narcotic drugs. However, in this pursuit we must not limit research into the legitimate uses of narcotic drug crops. For example, Jamaican scientists have developed a treatment for glaucoma using the cannabis plant. This must be encouraged.

At both the international and regional levels, we sometimes become so absorbed in the law enforcement aspect of the anti-drug question that we often ignore the social dimension. Of particular importance are health, education, social integration, and the human victims of the trade.

Developing countries rarely have the necessary resources to effectively provide treatment, including rehabilitation for drug addicts. Countries such as my own need international assistance and need to be able to take advantage of the exchange of information and technical expertise at the international level in order to deal effectively with this aspect of the drug problem. The costs to our societies in the area of rehabilitation, loss of human resources, social dislocation and public care for victims of drug-related violence place a heavy burden on the public purse.

Nevertheless, Jamaica is committed to doing all it can to deal with these aspects of the drug problem. We expect to strengthen our activities in the area of demand reduction, bolstered by the relevant programmes set forth in the Bridgetown Declaration of Principles, signed in May 1997, between the Government of the United States of America and the Governments of the Caribbean Community and other Caribbean States.

Jamaica welcomes the measures to promote judicial cooperation and the measures to counter money-laundering that are before the Assembly for adoption.

We are pleased at the progress which we have made in these areas over the past few years at the national level as also with our bilateral and regional partners in the Caribbean, North America and Europe. As the Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) has noted, what is important about the recent activity in the Caribbean region is not only the technical and financial aspects,...but the mood of seriousness and solidarity which characterizes the fight against drugs.

The Jamaican Government has established a Justice Training Institute for strengthening and improving the administration of justice as well as a Regional Drug Law Enforcement Training Centre; finalized our Drug Control Master Plan; and passed legislation in conformity with the requirements of the 1988 drug Convention to drastically increase the penalties for drug-trafficking, confiscate the assets of convicted drug dealers, criminalize money-laundering and allow the State to enter into mutual legal assistance treaties with other countries and allow for extradition. We are now drafting laws for the control of precursor chemicals.

The Jamaican Government has established an Assets Forfeiture/Money Laundering Unit. In accordance with the decisions of the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force, money obtained from seized assets will be used to assist victims of drug-related crimes and for programmes

in the areas of education, health and security and in the justice system.

Internationally, we have cooperated in serving documents, providing information on bank accounts and restraining accounts and properties. Another major achievement was the successful completion of negotiations with the United States Government for a maritime counter-narcotics agreement last year.

At the regional level, we were very pleased at the realization of the Barbados Plan of Action for Drug Control Coordination and Cooperation in the Caribbean. This Plan of Action is the blueprint for drug control coordination among the nations of the Caribbean subregion and was the result of hard work and commitment on the part of Caribbean Governments, the European Union and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme.

The Heads of Government of CARICOM have established an Intergovernmental Task Force on Drugs, chaired by Jamaica, to develop an implementation schedule establishing regional priorities based on the Barbados Plan of Action and Caribbean-United States regional and international treaties and reports.

Jamaica has a vested interest in curtailing the drug trade and I here reiterate our global commitment. This meeting must send a powerful message of unity to reverberate throughout our global village, of commitment to shared responsibility, of resolve to confront the challenges before us and of hope for the vulnerable in every country. We shall win this struggle.

The President: I thank the Minister of National Security and Justice of Jamaica for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jaswant Singh, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission of India.

Mr. Singh (India): Our congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at this special session on narcotic drugs. I would like to begin by offering the fullest support and cooperation of my country in leading these deliberations to a productive conclusion.

In January 1992, the statement issued after the Security Council met at the level of Heads of State or Government noted that non-military sources of instability in the social field had become threats to peace and security. Three years later, the World Summit for Social Development listed illicit drugs among the worldwide problems that posed threats to the health, safety, peace, security and well-being of our people. And three years further on, the United Nations Commission for Social Development, at its session in February this year, felt it essential to devote a full section of its report to violence, crime and the problem of illicit drugs as factors of social disintegration.

Clearly, the problem has persisted and grown in gravity, and we have so far dealt with it piecemeal. Equally clearly, that is not enough. The challenge posed by drugs is a complex, global problem. It can only be tackled through international cooperation. The General Assembly is the only forum where this can be achieved and this special session therefore has not come a day too soon.

The illicit production and trafficking of drugs imperil societies in every continent and at all levels of development. Drugs are a problem in which there is no divide between the North and the South. Both are affected and, unless they cooperate, both will be devastated. This explains why this is perhaps the only session of the General Assembly in recent memory at which there is complete agreement on all the documents before us. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs, acting as the Preparatory Committee for this special session, has made significant contributions by producing the draft Political Declaration and several other important documents. The Committee deserves our congratulations, particularly on the draft texts on demand reduction and money-laundering. These are especially welcome, providing as they do impetus for further action by the international community in these fields. I am proud that my country had the honour of serving as the Vice-Chairman-cum-Rapporteur of the Preparatory Committee that produced this good work. What we must now do, however, is translate this consensus into effective international action.

Historically, India has had a unique role in this sphere, being the largest producer and supplier of licit opium for many decades. The location of India is especially sensitive, situated as we are between the two biggest production centres of heroin and other opiates. Apart from the sensitivity of cultivating opium, there is a danger of India's becoming a transit country for the trafficking of drugs from neighbouring States. We in India have fearlessly faced challenges and acquitted ourselves with honour in all areas where trust was

reposed in us. Our law enforcement efforts, our adherence to international obligations and our bilateral and multilateral cooperation efforts bear testimony to our sincerity. The Indian Constitution and national legislation echo and share the concerns inherent in the United Nations conventions on this subject. We are gathered here today in a special session which marks the enhanced consciousness of the international community on the need for immediate action to address this grave menace and to adopt focused strategies in several very important directions.

First of all, we must seriously commit ourselves to enhancing enforcement efforts nationally and jointly with other countries on the front of supply reduction. This is a herculean task. The opening up of national economic boundaries and a more liberal regime of world commerce carry grave attendant risks. These can be surmounted by a sincere willingness to implement laws and conventions already in place. This session of the General Assembly should resolve to take a firm stand against all illicit cultivation and supply of drugs by upgrading all enforcement efforts.

There is an urgent need for international assistance, including financial assistance, to developing countries that are in one form or another ravaged by this problem and cannot possibly face up to a challenge of this magnitude alone or without massive supplementary resources. A credible framework of international cooperation should be evolved to thwart the efforts of traffickers and law-breakers across national boundaries by providing strong national legislation to effectively combat terrorism and narcoterrorism. The financial crime of money-laundering supports these heinous crimes and undermines growth and development. This requires an effective legislative framework and a network of arrangements for judicial cooperation among nations through the exchange of information between investigating agencies, law enforcers and their judicial systems.

Secondly, there must be urgent and enhanced interventions on the human side to stem the tragedy that flows from the use of drugs. Recognizing the long and tedious process of de-addiction and rehabilitation of drug abusers, India is implementing its demand reduction programme through the voluntary sector. It is perhaps a unique strategy, in which funds are provided by Government but services are delivered through non-governmental organizations.

Despite India's vulnerability on account of its geographical location and its being the largest producer of licit opium, it is a matter of some satisfaction that the demand for drugs has not acquired serious dimensions. Considering that a country with a serious drug problem also becomes a conduit for drug supply, international assistance, whether economic or technical, must be made available to Member States on the principle of shared responsibility. Our common humanity demands no less.

In developing countries, poverty, underdevelopment and drugs have a symbiotic relationship. International cooperation for development that promotes the sustained economic growth of developing countries is an absolute must in the war against drugs. What we see instead are shrinking flows of official development assistance, conditionalities that restrict the trade of developing countries and a net-transfer of resources from them to the developed world. This must change if we are to tackle some of the root causes of the problem of drugs.

Finally, I would like to make a plea to all our leaders and delegates from Member States that this fight against drugs is a battle that must be won. We Governments have to have at our disposal an exceptional arsenal of talented manpower, modern science and information technology which can help us overcome this trauma. I call upon all Member States to renew their commitment to this fight against drugs in the spirit of mutual cooperation, mutual assistance and sharing. In accordance with the draft declarations before us at this session, each nation should take immediate and credible steps to implement the resolutions adopted by the Assembly. I would urge Member States to ratify all existing conventions on drugs so that we can adopt a united stand to more effectively combat this menace.

The President: I thank the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission of India for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Patrick Albert Lewis, Chairman of the delegation of Antigua and Barbuda.

Mr. Lewis (Antigua and Barbuda): The Government of Antigua and Barbuda welcomes the focus of this special session of the General Assembly. What the Assembly is attempting to do — wage a war on drugs — is what my small country, with its limited material and financial resources, has been doing for several years at the national level, with attempts to secure the assistance of the international community. But the situation of Antigua and Barbuda is not unique. The entire Caribbean — indeed, small States worldwide — regularly

face the challenges associated with geographic location, territorial security and poverty.

I make no apology for standing before the Assembly to speak once again about the vulnerabilities of small island States. Indeed, I see it as my moral and national duty. This special session gives us an opportunity to address in a world forum an issue that, as we speak, is wreaking tremendous damage on the socio-economic infrastructure of our region. The dynamics of geography and supply and demand seem to have conspired to place the Caribbean on the front line of the drug trade as trans-shipment States, and the damage does not stop there. Increasingly, the greed exhibited by international drug traffickers seems destined to enable their product to infiltrate our communities, which could in turn begin a cycle of dependency within our countries.

Among the more disturbing trends in the drug trade is the shift from paying cash to drug runners to paying them in kind — with drugs. This causes the drugs to be peddled locally in order to get cash. In other words, the drug business in the Caribbean has switched from a demand-driven system to an offer-driven system. This means that pushers are actively seeking out new markets for their products among Caribbean people, who would not otherwise be consumers.

The Caribbean is a perfect highway between the factories of South America and the markets of North America and Europe. Sandro Calvani, Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme's regional office in Barbados, stated that the Caribbean is a highway with little risk of interruption of traffic, as it comprises five different judicial systems and 2,000 islands. He added that no engineer or businessman could have devised a better system of manufacturing and distribution.

The influence of the drug traffickers forces our Governments to shift very limited resources from development priorities to law enforcement and the rehabilitation of addicts. The associated violence, social erosion, economic dislocation and increase in criminal activity mean that for small societies striving to overcome economic vulnerability it becomes a tremendous challenge to maintain functioning institutions in an environment with the potential for decreased productivity. Quite frankly, there is the possibility for all of us to become the involuntary victims of the drug trade.

It is no secret that the small island developing and low-lying coastal States of the Caribbean have inadequate defences against the vast resources of the drug traffickers. In addition, if we are not sufficiently fearful of the devastation that can be caused by the illicit traffic in narcotics, we must be gravely concerned about the destruction that can accompany the attendant traffic in small arms and ammunition. In one of the most comprehensive plans of action on Caribbean policy and development, the West Indian Commission noted that nothing poses greater threats to civil society in the countries of the Caribbean Community than the drug problem, and nothing exemplifies the powerlessness of regional Governments more.

My Prime Minister addressed the issue of the powerlessness of regional Governments in a recent statement to the Caribbean Studies Association. In that statement, he referred to the dictatorial approach taken by certain countries in relation to specific drug interdiction policies that should be adopted by smaller countries. Given our limited capabilities, we acknowledge the importance of cooperation for developing mechanisms that can respond to incidents of drug-trafficking. We therefore encourage collaboration, where appropriate, to achieve the desired results: the apprehension and conviction of criminals.

Allow me to speak briefly on the subject of alternative development policies. Antigua and Barbuda — and, indeed, other Caribbean countries — introduced an offshore financial services sector as a direct response to the perceived need to diversify our economies in the face of globalization and trade liberalization. On the one hand, we are told that we must once again adjust our economic policies to encompass alternative development programmes. On the other hand, when we choose the financial services sector and follow the examples of other countries that have done so before us, we are labelled as havens for money launderers and corruption, and steps are taken to undermine our efforts and limit the competitive advantage that we may enjoy. We do not believe that this approach lends itself to genuine partnership and mutual respect. What we need is collaboration, information exchange and technical support to assist us in ensuring that our financial services sector is not abused by dubious sources while it provides us with much-needed economic resources.

History clearly proves that drug abuse and illicit trafficking know no boundaries; no country is inoculated against their effects. It is logical to conclude, therefore, that the fight against drug-trafficking and abuse must transcend any individual country strategy.

My Government supports an unbiased approach to the United Nations thematic agenda on drug control for the twenty-first century. The decision to focus on demand reduction, the elimination of illicit crops, judicial cooperation, money-laundering, stemming the illicit production of synthetic drugs and the control of drug-production chemicals must be consistent with the desire for a global strategy against drug-trafficking. The transnational nature of the drug problem warrants such concerted action to create the drug-free world that we all desire.

Antigua and Barbuda is committed to this global strategy. We have signed a number of interdiction agreements and appointed an official to coordinate national action against drug-trafficking and related crimes. That official works closely with the Attorney General to ensure formulation and implementation of the national drug policy. In addition to the policy initiatives, we are currently completing work on a drug treatment facility that we hope will be used not only as a centre for rehabilitation but also as a training facility in the region.

By sharing our experiences over the next three days and pledging to unite our efforts, we present a formidable obstacle to the drug traffickers and abusers. For its part, the Government of Antigua and Barbuda will continue to concentrate efforts on the international fight against the traffic in illicit drugs. We urge others to join this community of nations in our campaign against the purveyors of death and destruction who have the power to transform the meekest individual into a crazed killer, turn mother against child and destroy generation upon generation of our young.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of Antigua and Barbuda for his statement.

The meeting rose at 6.35 p.m.